

Message Text

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ORIGIN SNM-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 SS-20 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 SPC-03 L-03 AGR-20

DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 JUSE-00 NSC-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 029845

MO. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: U.S. OPIUM POLICY

REFERENCE: BANGKOK 2204

FROM AMBASSADOR VANCE FOR AMBASSADOR KINTNER

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1. I APPRECIATE YOUR CANDID ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF

THE US POSITION ON CND AGENDA ITEM 9 TO THE RTG. I HOPE EXPANDED DISCUSSION BELOW WILL PROVIDE USEFUL BACKGROUND ON PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS WHICH YOU CAN USE AS APPROPRIATE IN BRIEFING RTG.

2. IN 1971, THE PRESIDENT STATED THE MAJOR US POLICY GOAL TO ELIMINATE ILLICIT PRODUCTION OF OPIUM AND TO REPLACE NATURAL OPIATES WITH SYNTHETICS. THIS GOAL REMAINS UNCHANGED. AT THE TIME IT WAS USG HOPE THAT SYNTHETICS WOULD BE AVAILABLE WITHIN FIVE YEARS TO ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR LICIT OPIUM PRODUCTION. THE OPTIMISM OF 1971 HAS NOT BEEN BORNE OUT BY SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. WE NOW FACE THE NEED TO SUPPORT LICIT PRODUCTION FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER DECADE.

3. IN APPROACHING THE NEED FOR ANOTHER DECADE OF OPIUM PRODUCTION, IT APPEARED PRUDENT PRIOR TO THE 1974 CND MEETING TO ASSESS THE ADEQUACY OF THE CURRENT WORLD MARKET STRUCTURE TO PROVIDE LICIT OPIUM UNDER THE MOST HIGHLY CONTROLLED

CONDITIONS. THIS NEED FOR ASSESSMENT WAS UNDERScoreD BY A DIMINUTION OF US MANUFACTURERS' STOCKPILES TO UNSAFE LEVELS AND GROWING WORLDWIDE REPORTS OF LOW INVENTORIES AND SHORTAGES.

4. IN ASSESSING THE NEED FOR A CHANGE IN THE OPIUM MARKET, THE USG PRIMARY CONCERN REMAINS CONTROL. WE SEEK TO FACE THE REALITY OF A POTENTIAL SHORTAGE IN TERMS OF THE SAFEST WAY TO MEET MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS. IN SO DOING THE USG, WHICH HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY TAKEN A POSITION ON POPPY STRAW, NOTED THE INCREASING USE OF POPPY STRAW FOR OPIATE PRODUCTION. WHILE FURTHER RESEARCH IS NECESSARY, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT STRAW IS A POTENTIALLY MORE CONROLLABLE PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE. ALSO PRELIMINARY USDA ANALYSIS INDICATES A 30 PERCENT GREATER YIELD FROM POPPY STRAW THAN GUM.

5. THUS IN ADDITION TO THE STOCKPILE RELEASE, A SHIFT TO GREATER USE OF STRAW BECAME THE PRIMARY THRUST OF OUR REVISED STANCE. FYI. THIS POSITION WAS WORKED OUT WITH
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AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN WHILE HE WAS IN WASHINGTON. WE ARE MOST SENSITIVE TO OUR NEED FOR INDIAN ALLOCATIONS AND THE NEED TO WORK THROUGH MULTILATERAL CHANNELS IN PROPOSING TECHNIQUES TO INDIA CONSISTENT WITH ITS LABOR INTENSIVE ECONOMY. END FYI.

6. IN REVIEWING THE TACTICS AND SUBSTANCE OF WORKING METHODICALLY TOWARD A STRAW BASED MARKET, GAPS IN CULTIVA-

TION AND PROCESSING RESEARCH BECAME QUITE EVIDENT. FOR EXAMPLE, INDIA INDICATED INTEREST IN ASSISTANCE FROM FOREIGN INCLUDING AMERICAN FIRMS IN ITS MOVE TO SECONDARY STRAW, BUT A LACK OF COMPANY KNOW-HOW (AND NO PREVIOUS USG RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STRAW) PRECLUDED A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM AMERICAN FIRMS.

7. THE RESEARCH AND TESTING DECISIONS FOLLOWED FROM OUR OVERRIDING CONCERN WITH CONTROL AND THE INCREASING USE WORLDWIDE OF STRAW.

8. AGAIN LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR THAT OUR RESEARCH AND TESTING EFFORT IS DESIGNED TO BE SHARED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. ONLY BY MAKING THE OFFER TO UNDERTAKE AND SHARE RESEARCH AND TESTING CAN WE CREDIBLY BE ADVOCATES OF A MORE RAPID, YET ORDERLY, TRANSITION TO STRAW. UNDER NO CONDITION WILL OUR RESEARCH AND TESTING EFFORT DRIFT INTO A DECISION TO GROW DOMESTICALLY FOR US REQUIREMENTS. EVEN A SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDED DOMESTIC RESEARCH PROGRAM WOULD REQUIRE SPECIFIC NEW PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORIZATION.

9. THE ISSUE OF PRE/POST CND TIMING WAS EXPLICITLY RAISED WITH THE PRESIDENT. IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT A YEAR'S DELAY WOULD JEOPARDIZE OUR INTEREST IN PROMOTING A PRO-STRAW POLICY NOW AND WOULD INHIBIT OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY IN A MULTILATERAL CONTEXT TO THE POENTIAL SHORTAGE WHICH WOULD FACE THE US IF AND WHEN THE STOCKPILE RUNS OUT.

10. WE ARE, OF COURSE, SENSITIVE TO RTG AND OTHER ILLICIT PRODUCERS' ATTITUDES. ALL OF OUR DRUG POLICY MAKERS HAVE TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY IN THE ILLICIT PRODUCERS' AREAS. AS YOU WELL KNOW THE MAJOR THRUST OF THE PRESIDENT'S SUCCESS-
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FUL INTERNATIONAL DRUG PROGRAM HAS BEEN INTERDICTION OF DRUGS COMING FROM THE NEAR EAST AND THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE.

11. THE RTG SHOULD KNOW THAT WE STAND MORE FIRMLY THAN EVER BEHIND A POLICY OF STRICT CONTROL. WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO DESIRE TO SHARE IN THE SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY EARNED BY THE WORLD'S LICIT EXPORT CROP (ABOUT \$20M US). OUR MAIN DESIRE, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SYNTHETICS ARE AVAILABLE, IS TO REDUCE OPIUM ACREAGE THROUGH STRAW WHILE ASSURING LICIT SUPPLIES FOR ESSENTIAL MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS. SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED STRAW TECHNOLOGY MIGHT PERMIT US TO CUT ACREAGE BY AS MUCH AS 30 PERCENT.

12. IN THE MEANTIME, WE OPPOSE THE ENTRY OF ANY NEW NATION INTO THE EXPORT MARKET. WE BELIEVE COUNTRIES WITH POOR

CONTROL RECORDS ON OPIUM WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL
MECHANICALLY HARVESTED STRAW.

13. YOUR SUGGESTION CONCERNING A COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS
IS USEFUL. IN FACT, WE HAVE PLANNED TO ASK THE CND TO
REQUEST THE UN NARCOTICS LABORATORY TO PROVIDE MULTILATERAL
COORDINATION AND MAXIMIZE DIFFUSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS ON
STRAW. SUCH AN EFFORT UNDER UN AUSPICES IS NOW UNDERWAY
WITH REGARD TO BRACTEATUM. IT WOULD NOT BE SUGGESTED THAT
THE UN ACTIVELY INTERVENE IN THE TIMING AND LEVEL OF
INDIVIDUAL NATION'S RESEARCH PROGRAMS. THUS OUR DECISIONS
WOULD BE OUR OWN.

14. WE BELIEVE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT RTG BE INFORMED
BEFORE THE CND MEETING OF OUR POSITION. WE BELIEVE THAT
THIS CAN BE DONE AS SUGGESTED IN STATE 26073 WITHOUT
JEOPARDIZING OUR CURRENT NARCOTICS POSITION IN THAILAND. KISSINGER

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